IN THE CLAIMS

Please cancel claims 4, 21, 27, and 30 without prejudice.

Please amend claims 1, 18, 25, and 29 as follows:

1. (Currently Amended) A platen for supporting a media sheet, comprising:

a contact surface;

a channel defined in the contact surface and extending a length, the channel having a varying cross-sectional area comprising varying a depth and a width of the channel along at least a portion of the length thereof; and

an air passage extending from the channel to deliver negative pressure to the channel,

wherein the channel has a first end and a second end opposite the first end, wherein the depth of the channel at the second end is less than the depth of the channel at the first end, wherein the width of the channel at the first end is greater than the width of the channel at the second end, and wherein the air passage extends from the first end of the channel~~, and wherein the second end of the channel has a smaller cross-sectional area than the first end of the channel~~.

2. (Previously Presented) The platen of claim 1, wherein the varying cross-sectional area further comprises a tapered portion in the channel.

3. (Original) The platen of claim 2, wherein the tapered portion comprises multiple tapered portions along the length of the channel.

4. (Cancelled)

5-6. (Cancelled)

7. (Original) The platen of claim 1, wherein the air passage extends from the channel at a tilted orientation configured to reduce friction.

8. (Previously Presented) The platen of claim 12, wherein the air passage comprises first air passages extending from the first array of the channels and second air passages extending from the second array of the channels.

9. (Previously Presented) The platen of claim 13, further comprising a channel interconnecting and longitudinally extending between the at least one of the channels in the first array and the at least one of the channels in the second array having the common longitudinal axis.

10. (Previously Presented) The platen of claim 1, further comprising elongated recesses defined in the contact surface and extending transverse from the channel.

11. (Original) The platen of claim 1, wherein the channel comprises an array of channels extending substantially parallel to each other.

12. (Original) The platen of claim 1, wherein the channel comprises a first array of channels and a second array of channels, the first array of the channels extending substantially parallel to each other and the second array of the channels extending substantially parallel to each other.

13. (Original) The platen of claim 12, wherein at least one of the channels in the first array includes a common longitudinal axis with at least one of the channels in the second array.

14. (Withdrawn) The platen of claim 12, wherein the channels of the first array are staggered with respect to the channels in the second array.

15. (Original) The platen of claim 1, wherein the contact surface is a substantially planar surface.

16. (Withdrawn) The platen of claim 1, wherein the contact surface is disposed around a cylindrical drum with the channel extending along a longitudinal length of the cylindrical drum.

17. (Withdrawn) The platen of claim 1, wherein the contact surface is disposed around a cylindrical drum with the channel extending laterally around the cylindrical drum with respect to a longitudinal length of the cylindrical drum.

18. (Currently Amended) A printer device configured to support a media sheet, the printer device comprising:

a print engine;

a negative air pressure source; and

a platen operatively coupled to the negative air pressure source and disposed adjacent the print engine, the platen including:

a contact surface;

a channel defined in the contact surface and extending a length, the channel having a varying cross-sectional area comprising varying a depth and a width of the channel along at least a portion of the length thereof; and

an air passage extending from the channel to the negative air pressure source,

wherein the channel has a first end and a second end opposite the first end, wherein the depth of the channel at the second end is less than the depth of the channel at the first end, wherein the width of the channel at the first end is greater than the width of the channel at the second end, and wherein the air passage extends from the first end of the channel~~, and wherein the second end of the channel has a smaller cross-sectional area than the first end of the channel~~.

19. (Previously Presented) The printer device of claim 18, wherein the varying cross-sectional area further comprises a tapered portion in the channel.

20. (Original) The printer device of claim 19, wherein the tapered portion comprises multiple tapered portions along the length of the channel.

21. (Cancelled)

22-23. (Cancelled)

24. (Original) The printer device of claim 18, wherein the air passage extends from the channel at a tilted orientation configured to reduce friction.

25. (Currently Amended) A method for supporting media in a printer device, the method comprising:

positioning a back surface of a media sheet against a portion of a contact surface of a platen; and

establishing negative pressure applied to the media sheet through an air passage extending from a channel defined in the contact surface, including controlling the negative pressure applied to the media sheet to suction the media sheet to the contact surface of the platen by providing the channel with a varying cross-sectional area comprising varying a depth and a width of the channel along at least a portion of a length of the channel,

wherein the channel has a first end and a second end opposite the first end, wherein the depth of the channel at the second end is less than the depth of the channel at the first end, wherein the width of the channel at the first end is greater than the width of the channel at the second end, and wherein the air passage extends from the first end of the channel~~, and wherein the second end of the channel has a smaller cross-sectional area than the first end of the channel~~.

26. (Original) The method of claim 25, wherein the positioning further comprises positioning the media sheet to leave an exposed channel portion, uncovered by the media sheet, to suction the media sheet to the contact surface of the platen.

27. (Cancelled)

28. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 25, wherein the establishing further comprises controlling the negative pressure applied to the media sheet by providing a tapered portion in the channel.

29. (Currently Amended) A platen for supporting a media sheet, comprising:

a contact surface;

negative pressure means for delivering negative pressure to the contact surface; and

channel means defined in the contact surface for controlling the negative pressure delivered to the contact surface from the negative pressure means over a length of the channel means,

the channel means having a varying cross-sectional area comprising a varying depth and a varying width, wherein a depth of the channel means at a second end portion is less than a depth of the channel means at a first end portion, wherein a width of the channel means at the first end portion is greater than a width of the channel means at the second end portion, and wherein the negative pressure is delivered to the first end portion of the channel means ~~with the negative pressure delivered to a first end portion of the channel means and a second end portion of the channel means having a smaller cross-sectional area than the first end portion~~.

30. (Cancelled)

31. (Previously Presented) The platen of claim 1, wherein the air passage is confined to the first end of the channel.

32. (Previously Presented) The printer device of claim 18, wherein the air passage is confined to the first end of the channel.

33. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 25, wherein the air passage is confined to the first end of the channel.